

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants request acknowledgment of the priority claim and confirmation that the priority documents have been received. According the MPEP 1828, the International Bureau is to furnish copies of the certified priority document(s) to the designated offices. If the certified copies are not forwarded to the designated office, the Examiner may contact either the Special Program Examiner in their technology center, or contact Mike Neas at PCT-help desk (571-272-3289) for assistance in retrieving the certified copies.

Claims 1 and 5 have been amended to correct clerical errors.

Claims 1-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sawamura et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0148784, hereinafter "Sawamura") in view of Chatzipetros (U.S. Patent No. 5,544,996).

With regard to claim 1, the subject matter of claim 1 is disclosed in the Japanese Patent Application, filed July 19, 2002. Applicants submit that the priority date (July 19, 2002) of claim 1 is prior to Sawamura's U.S. patent application publication date (August 7, 2003) and Sawamura's corresponding Japanese patent application publication date (December 20, 2002). Therefore, Sawamura is not a reference under 35 U.S.C. 102(a), (b) or (c)/103.

In order to perfect Applicants' claim of priority, Applicants submit herewith English language translation of the certified copy of the Japanese Patent Applications No. 2002-210612 and statement that the translation of the certified copy is accurate. Applicants submit that the Japanese Patent Applications No. 2002-210612 satisfies the enablement and description requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

The remaining claims in this application depend directly or indirectly on claim 1, and thus are patentable for at least the same reasons as the parent claim.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned agent to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No.37395.

Respectfully submitted,

PEARNE & GORDON LLP

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